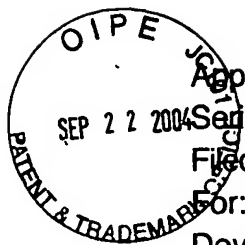


IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



Applicants: Michael D. Cecchi et al

Docket No.: H-1351

Serial No.: 10/053,944

Group: 1744

Filed: January 24, 2002

Examiner: D. Redding

Title: "Biological Specimen Culturing System and Method With Onboard Specimen Development Sensors"

RESPONSE TO FIRST OFFICE ACTION

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

This is responsive to the Official Office Action dated October 14, 2003.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please add the following new claims.

11. A biological specimen-culturing assembly comprising:

- a) a specimen growth-supporting incubator, said incubator having at least one specimen-supporting shelf;
- b) one or more optically transparent specimen container(s) positioned in said incubator on said shelf; and
- c) specimen growth-monitoring equipment associated with said incubator to visually monitor individual specimen development in said container(s) during a specimen growth cycle, whereby individual specimen development can be visually ascertained externally of the incubator without the need to remove the specimen(s) from said incubator during said growth cycle, said growth-monitoring equipment including internal signal-producing optical imaging devices adjacent to said container(s) in said incubator, and at least one external image signal-processing device outside of said incubator, which image signal-processing device converts signals from said imaging devices to visual images.

12. The assembly of Claim 11 wherein said specimen container(s) are positioned in wells in said shelf.

13. The assembly of Claim 11 wherein said growth-monitoring equipment includes an internal audio signal-producing device adjacent to said container(s) in said incubator, and at least one external audio signal-processing device outside of said incubator, which audio signal-processing device is operable to record sounds emanating from specimens disposed in said specimen container(s).